

WASHINGTON D.C. - In the wake of mounting national debt, Congressman Jim Costa (CA-20) joined the Blue Dog Coalition today in asking President Bush to call an emergency bipartisan budget summit regarding the nation's added fiscal burden in the wake of Gulf Region reconstruction efforts.

Thirty-one Blue Dogs - moderate and conservative Democrats in the House of Representatives - joined Congressman Costa in signing the letter to President Bush. Costa has long expressed tremendous concern over mounting U.S. debt and is particularly troubled by our growing dependence on foreign governments to finance our debt. Earlier this year, Congressman Costa and the Blue Dogs offered a 12 Step Plan that would cure our nation's addiction to deficit spending that required, among other things, all federal agencies pass clean audits, a balanced budget, and the setting aside of a rainy day fund to be used in the event of a natural disaster.

"Today, our nation's long term fiscal security is growing even bleaker with the addition of billions of dollars in emergency supplemental funds needed to rebuild the Gulf Region," writes the Blue Dog Coalition. "As such, members of the Blue Dog Coalition urge you to immediately call for an emergency bipartisan budget summit to get our nation's fiscal house in order."

Costa stated, "There is ample evidence that the current federal budget system is not working. The tragedies of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita only emphasize its critical condition. The Blue Dogs have sound and reasonable suggestions to help our nation get back on a strong fiscal footing. I certainly hope the President will be open-minded enough to listen to these worthwhile suggestions or any other suggestions that will restore fiscal sanity."

The thirty-two Blue Dogs signing the letter include: Joe Baca (CA), John Barrow (GA), Marion Berry (AR), Sanford Bishop (GA), Dan Boren (OK), Allen Boyd (FL), Dennis Cardoza (CA), Ed Case (HI), Ben Chandler (KY), Jim Cooper (TN), Jim Costa (CA), Bud Cramer (AL), Lincoln Davis (TN), Harold Ford (TN), Jane Harman (CA), Stephanie Herseth (SD), Tim Holden (PA), Steve Israel (NY), Jim Matheson (UT), Mike McIntyre (NC), Mike Michaud (ME), Dennis Moore (KS), Collin Peterson (MN), Earl Pomeroy (ND), Mike Ross (AR), John Salazar (CO), Loretta Sanchez (CA), Adam Schiff (CA), David Scott (GA), John Tanner (TN), Gene Taylor (MS), Mike Thompson (CA).

The Blue Dogs letter adds that the Coalition, "believes that the United States should not be forced to borrow funds from foreign nations to finance our reconstruction efforts. We owe it to the American people to act responsibly by sitting down together and devising a serious plan to keep America from going even deeper into debt."

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